



## OLD KNIK POWER PLANT

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation • Division of Spill Prevention and Response

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### Site Description

The Old Knik Power Plant was completed in 1953 under an agreement between the Alaska Railroad and Chugach Electric Association. It was originally designed to provide electric power and steam heat to the Alaska Native Services Hospital, the Alaska Railroad, and numerous businesses in the railroad industrial area.

Chugach Electric Association entered into a 55 year lease with the Alaska Railroad to operate the plant in 1959. The plant originally burned coal but was converted to natural gas in 1965. It was decommissioned in 1985 and ultimately sold to Hobbs Industries in 1989. Hobbs Industries operates out of the building in addition to leasing other areas of the plant out to other businesses. The electric substation that was located adjacent to the power plant building had contained two 1,200 gallon electrical transformers. These were sold to Papelera International, Inc. in 1997, reportedly to be transported to Central America for use there. In April 1998, ADEC was notified that the contents of the transformers (estimated 2,400 gallons of mineral oil with low levels of PCB's) were drained on site.

### Threats and Contaminants

Contamination found to date is petroleum hydrocarbon compounds with low levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's). The PCB content of the transformer oil was 15 and 24 mg/kg. Both soil and groundwater impacts were identified but the extent (and concentration) of the contamination has not been defined. The potential threat may be from ingestion, inhalation and/or migration of contaminated groundwater to surface water or drinking water wells.

### Public Health and Environmental Concerns

The site is located within 200 feet of Ship Creek. The site information from this project is not sufficient to determine what threat (if any) is

posed by the contamination. Soil and water

contamination has been identified but additional site information is required in order to evaluate possible health and environmental concerns.

### Response Actions

Hobbs Industries responded by installing sorbent boom and an oil/water separator in the storm water system located at (and adjacent to) the plant. Hobbs Industries also excavated 60 cubic yards of contaminated soil which is currently stockpiled on site; removed concrete footings; and stored the transformers on another area of the site.

### Current Status

The site investigation of the spill in the substation yard (and the storm drain system) has been requested. However, Hobbs Industries has not initiated the investigation. The soil stockpile remains on site and must be addressed in a cleanup plan. Cleanup levels for soil and groundwater must be established prior to consideration of cleanup actions. EPA conducted a Brownfields Assessment of the Old Knik Power Plant site and concluded petroleum hydrocarbon and metals contamination are present at levels that exceed health risk based standards.